



Dear colleagues,

Our Affiliates are required to do a lot with a little, and fundraising can feel like one of your most monumental tasks. My advice is to start small – meet your organization (and its fundraising program) where it's at. Consider conducting a brief SWOT analysis of your fundraising operations in order to thoroughly understand the current state of the program. What do you do well? In what areas do you fall short? What fundraising trails have you yet to blaze? What factors put your organization at risk? From there, build a fundraising program step-by-step following the fundamental building blocks – case, leadership, prospects, and plan – to ensure success.

- Dennis G. Serrette

Senior Vice President, Partnerships and Advancement



Affiliate Spotlight

On Thursday, May 10th, National Urban League President and CEO, Marc Morial, joined the Shenango Valley Urban League (SVUL) at their 50th Anniversary dinner, themed, "Carrying the Torch: Continuing the Legacy." The event was the largest in the organization's history, with more than 350 attendees, including some of the area's most prominent political and community leaders. The program featured recognition of the Shenango Valley Urban League's founders and charter Board Members with the inaugural Urban Visionary Leadership Awards and a keynote address by Mr. Morial.

The event was also a tremendous fundraising success, raising more than double the revenue of previous years' dinners. Dr. Erin Houston, President and CEO of the Shenango Valley Urban League, led the event's fundraising efforts and focused on targeted asks to the organization's closest friends, Board members, and most generous past supporters. Dr. Houston created customized proposals for lead sponsor prospects and scheduled in-person sponsorship solicitations. Through this personalized approach, SVUL received their first-ever 5-figure sponsorship!

Dr. Houston looks forward to leveraging the event's success by identifying major gift prospects from event attendees, stewarding sponsors, and maintaining the momentum and excitement generated by promotion of the 50th Anniversary. Dr. Houston plans to engage the SVUL Board of Directors to implement the solicitation process utilized for the event's fundraising efforts to raise additional support for the annual fund.

Pictured right: Marc Morial, President and CEO of the National Urban League (left), and Dr. Erin Houston, President and CEO of the Shenango Valley Urban League (right), enjoy the SVUL 50th Anniversary dinner.



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ACTIVISM FUNDRAISING



National
Urban League

New Tools!

Having trouble determining how to engage your Board in fundraising? Or how to get them involved with your Affiliate's programs and activities? Or determining who will introduce you to contacts within their networks? Or do you find it challenging to constantly ask for funds over and over, for each event, plus an annual Board gift?

We've developed a new tool to help you inventory all the many ways your Board members can, *and should*, be involved with your Affiliate, so that you can ask ONCE. With this tool, you will know exactly how, who, why, and when you should expect your Board's contributions, introductions, involvement, and engagement.

Please access our **Board Engagement Plan and Pledge Form**, under the "Leadership" section of the Project Rock Toolkit, [HERE](#).

Each Board member should be asked to complete this form at your first Board meeting of the fiscal year so you can inventory fundraising opportunities and plan your activities throughout the year.

Please visit www.projectrock.org to access the full toolkit.

Webinars On-Demand!

Project Rock bi-weekly Executive Fundraising Academy webinars are now available **on-demand!** You can now view our previously recorded webinars at a time most convenient for you.

1. Follow the link for on-demand webinars [HERE](#).
2. Select a session that does not have a scheduled date and time listed (this means the live recording date and time has passed) under "Upcoming Trainings."
3. Click "Register" and you can view the session immediately or download it for later.

Questions?

Call the Project Rock Hotline at 212-558-5309.

Prospect Identification

Many Affiliates are constantly seeking strategies for donor acquisition. More donors equals more funds for critically important Urban League programs, right? The short answer is yes, of course, but the better answer is, not exactly. Your BEST prospects are your current donors, not new ones, for a few reasons:

1. They're qualified!

Good prospects are those with affinity (interest), access (a way to reach them), and capacity (funds to give). Giving is a language all on its own. By giving a gift, a donor has expressed interest, they've provided you with their contact information to access them, and they've shown you a glimpse of their giving capacity. Take notice of your donors' giving behaviors and personally connect with those who demonstrate an exceptional commitment to the Movement (consistent giving, large gifts, or increasing gift levels).

2. There's more where that came from!

..Or there *may* be. Just because a donor gives \$50 each year, doesn't mean they can't give more, or don't want to. Consider doing a wealth screening of your current donors, Board members, former Board members, membership, and event attendees to determine if a few, or more, have capacity to give at a larger level. Once identified as major gift prospects, be sure to implement personalized cultivation strategies to inform and involve donors, and eventually upgrade donors to higher gift levels.

3. You can afford it!

It takes much more time, effort, and resources to acquire a new donor than to keep one. Be sure you are stewarding donor relationships adequately. Thank you calls, emails, notes, and updates are activities your Board and volunteers are likely happy to assist with. Investing time and effort in donor retention strategies is worth it and, really, you can't afford not to!